1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

among unmarried girls for the attention of an eligible bachelor on these occasions. A young man between the ages of about fifteen and eighteen makes a point of "going the rounds," attending sprees at as many settlements as he can, and thereby meeting as many eligible girls as possible. His father usually takes a paternal interest in his amorous intrigues, by arranging trips which will enable the young fellow to "see the world." Thus, the average young woman and young man enjoy a series of affairs during their youth. It is rarely that a girl becomes pregnant during this period. The reasons for this I am not sure of, but informants are definite in stating that both contraceptive methods and abortion are used. The opinion seems to be prevalent, however, that an unmarried girl uses these methods infrequently. It is possible, of course, that a certain number of conceptions which might arise from such casual unions are prevented by temporary sterility and by ineptness of technique.

Contraceptive measures may be used by both men and women. They take two forms: bush medicines which may be self-administered, usually as infusions; and ritualistic treatments by the piaiyen.[1] Abortion is induced usually by old women who are skilled in such matters. They administer an infusion of bush herbs to the patient, which is said to induce violent abdominal cramps. Manual assistance is given by kneading the abdomen, and, occasionally, it is said, small sharp sticks are inserted into the vagina "to open the woman up." The latter method is said to produce chronic infertility which can be cured only by the piaiyen. My information on this subject is somewhat indefinite inasmuch as the methods are for the most part in the hands of women and piaiyen, who, when questioned, naturally profess ignorance of the subject. A certain plant, of which I have specimens which have not been identified, is drunk as an infusion by the men, and is said to make "a man run water." It is effective for only a day or two after use. All male informants agreed, often volunteering the information, that contraceptive and abortive methods of one sort or another are in use.

Premarital sexual affairs theoretically take place only between individuals who are eligible to marry, i.e. those who are not siblings or parallel cousins. Incest tabus apply to siblings and parallel

[1] Priest or medicine man.

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83 a child (1936:76). No adult of reproductive age seems to have re-
mained for long outside of a marriage bond. Extramarital sexual
[837] encounters were not uncommon, and adolescents were not prevented from
[836] sexual experimentation (1936:72). The separation of sexual partners
did not intervene to limit population size.

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842 Contraceptive measures are reported to have been familiar to both
[756] men and women (1936:73). These include "bush medicines" and "ritual-
istic treatments" performed by a piaiman or shaman. However, the
exact species are not identified and their efficacy as well as the
incidence of their use are not noted. Old women were reported to have
[887] been experienced in inducing abortions through the use of an infusion
[847] of bush herbs and manual manipulation including the insertion of small,
sharp sticks.

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168 Aside from these behavioral controls, there apparently were
physiological factors at work. These are mentioned but their effects
cannot be established. Gillin notes, for example, that it was rare
for an adolescent girl to become pregnant (1936:73). Regarding this
observation, Gillin suggests that temporary sterility and ineptness
[164] of technique may explain the lack of pregnancies. Also, the incidence
of malaria, hook worm, round worm, and other parasites may have con-
tributed to periods of sexual inactivity and temporary sterility as
well as affecting the mortality of infants and others.

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162 In sum, for the 1932-33 period, those behavioral and physiological
factors which affected population size were recorded without regard
for their situational context. Still, the reproductive results seem
clear: i.e., the ratio of adults to children was about one to one in

163 The number of children ever born range between four and seven to
*177 those women who are fifty-five or older. The range is eight to four-
teen for the women between forty and fifty-four. In other words, the
seven women fifty-five and older have had a total of thirty-seven
children of which thirty survived to adulthood. To date, the seven
women forty to fifty-four have had a total of eighty-one children of
which sixty-five survive. And some women in this younger age group
have not ceased reproducing. The women in this category are sub-
divided into those forty to forty-four and those forty-five to fifty-
four so that further reproductive potential is evident. The average
is 5.3 children ever born with 4.3 survivi[redacted]ulthood for the
women fifty-five and older. For the women forty to fifty-four, the
average is 11.6 children ever born with 9.3 surviving. This is more
than a doubling of the number of births as well as those children
surviving.

The 1960 Government census provides a check on the age group of
women fifty-five and older. At that time, these women were forty-
five and older. Birth records collected at that time are reported in
Table 11. The same pattern of a greater number of births to younger
women is apparent.

842 Concerning a popular knowledge of contraception, ignorance for
[887] the most part is expressed by both men and women. It is known that
[278] older women can identify a small leaf and a vine which boiled together
and administered as a drink is supposed to render a woman permanently
847 sterile. No one is reported to have used this measure. An effective
method, infanticide, is practiced.[16] This may occur with a young

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 71]

This may occur with a young mother with an insecure relationship with the father or a child that is not her husband's. Also, a poor subsistence situation may inspire a woman to neglect or kill her infant. From the confidences expressed, there have occurred about five cases of infanticide over the last ten years. Aside from these measures, some women have expressed desires to limit the number of children they produce but profess a lack of knowledge on how to do so. With every fertile woman approaching the fulfillment of a potential to reproduce twelve to thirteen children, the implications for accelerating population growth are apparent. Also, with medical attention and other government assistance, the number of children who survive has increased.

Over the last forty years, the reproductive pattern of the Upper Barama River Carib population seems to have responded to changes in economic conditions. There is no evidence to demonstrate that this population was ever in any long period of equilibrium with regard to its size, or well regulated by cultural practices to maintain it below any direct relationship to fluctuations in local food resources. On the contrary, it appears that this population previously underwent conditions of famine from time to time. King (1968:16) reports a drought for Guyana every thirteen to fourteen years. Although there are no direct records kept for the Upper Barama River area, there are indications of periodic local food shortages. In the six years previous to the establishment of development programs at Baramita Air Strip, the Government was called upon twice to send relief food packages to the Caribs not directly involved in mining. However, by this time, the total population was influenced by the mining